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EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - ASEAN REGIONAL SUMMIT/PM ABE'S
SPEECH AT NATO - TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Most Tuesday morning papers front-paged
Monday's conclusion of the 16-nation East Asia Summit in
Cebu, the Philippines.

11. "Will Envisioned Charter Change ASEAN?" The top-
circulation, moderate Yomiuri editorialized (1/16): "The
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which
marks its 40th anniversary this summer, has entered an
important phase of major change. ASEAN leaders agreed at
their summit in Cebu, the Philippines, to bring forward
the target date for achieving their goal of creating an
ASEAN Community by five years to 2015. They also agreed
to create a charter by the end of this year. The
envisioned charter is said to include revisions to the
group's long-held doctrine of noninterference in member
states' internal affairs, which would be a major
change.... Why is ASEAN trying to draft a charter now?
The membership of Myanmar, which lags far behind in
democratization, appears to be one of the reasons.
Emphasizing regional harmony, ASEAN has not actively
gotten involved in Myanmar's internal affairs. With the
establishment of a charter, however, the organization
aims to win the trust of the international community by
enhancing its capacity of the members to act in concert,
since Myanmar and ASEAN currently face mounting criticism
from the US and Europe."

12. "Maintain Momentum for Cooperation in East Asia" An
editorial in the business-oriented Nihon Keizai commented
(1/16): "...Leaders from ASEAN and other East Asian
nations discussed North Korea, energy security, and
regional free trade at the second East Asian Summit in
Cebu, the Philippines. Though ASEAN will not go straight
in the direction of an economic community similar to the

European Union (EU), it is significant that momentum is gathering in the region to join hands to resolve problems. This is due in part to the improvement of ties between Japan and China following the formation of the Abe government.... Both Japan and China must continue to act as 'grownups' and preserve the dynamics of regional unity and cooperation. These two countries should not struggle over leadership but compete in terms of projects and policies intended to deepen regional economic cooperation."

13. "PM Abe Too Enthusiastic" The liberal Asahi editorialized (1/16): "Prime Minister Abe spoke at NATO Headquarters last week in Belgium, becoming the first Japanese prime minister to do so. Abe proposed expanded exchanges and cooperation with NATO, including regular meetings between the Japanese foreign and defense ministers and the NATO secretary general and other senior officials. He also stressed Japan's positive stance toward the dispatch of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) personnel abroad on international peacekeeping and other missions. It is true that there are areas in which Japan and NATO can cooperate, including humanitarian and disaster relief missions. Nonetheless, PM Abe appeared to be too enthusiastic.... Did he go overboard after the Japan Defense Agency was upgraded to the Ministry of Defense with the SDF's missions abroad becoming one of their main duties? Abe should have spoken about Japan's principles in a more composed manner."

SCHIEFFER